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The 2016 Spring Wedding Issue

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MARCH 31-APRIL 13, 2016

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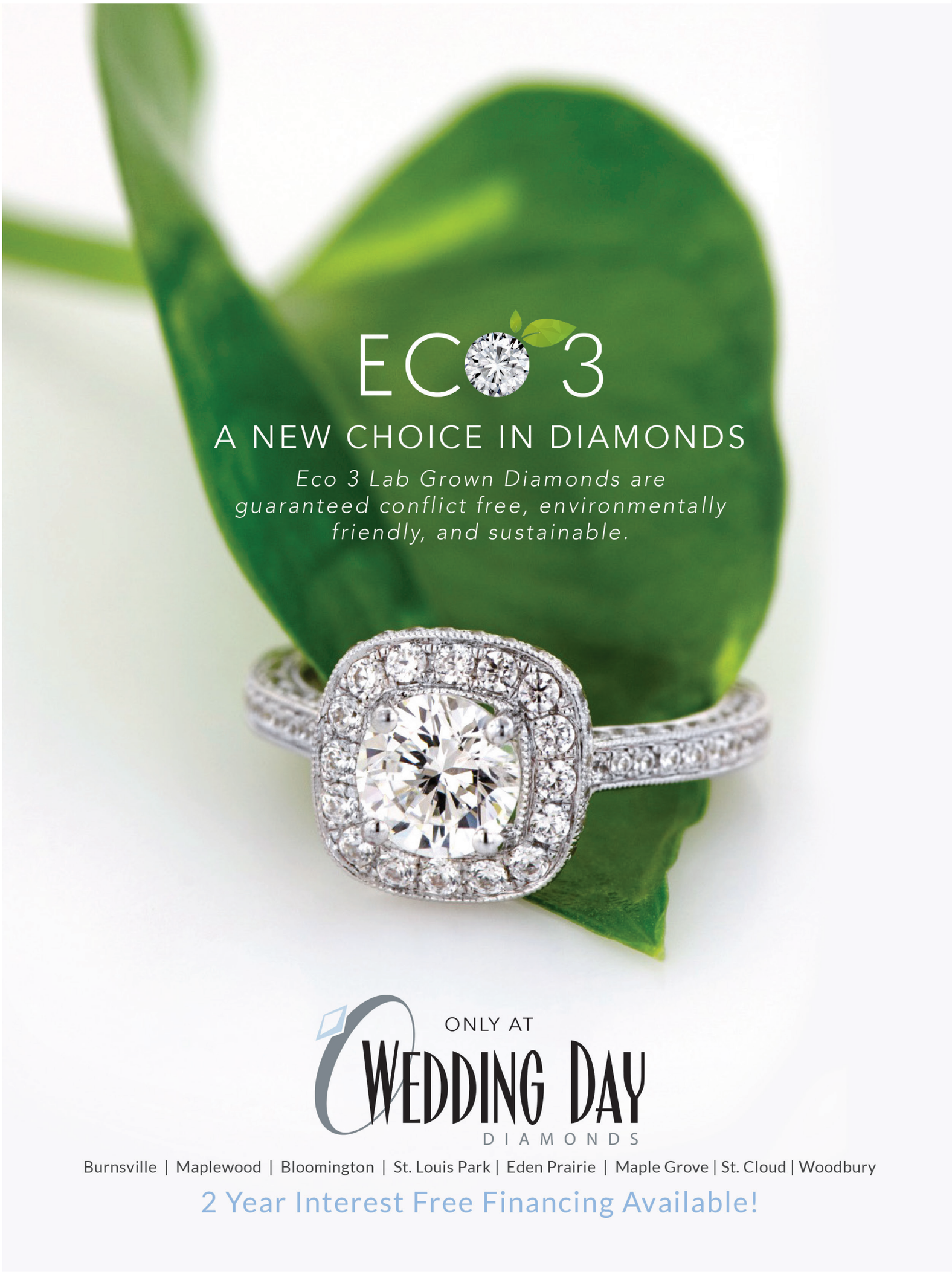
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ON THE COVER

We're celebrating Modern Love in this 2016 Spring Wedding Issue, featuring Cheena Gorzalski and Zsuzsi Bork at Paikka on the cover. Photo by Heidi Garrido, HM Photography







Page 20: Photo by Heidi Garrido, HM Photography. Page 52: Photo by Eliesa Johnson, Photogen Inc. Page 58: Photo by Melissa Hesse, Rivets & Roses. Page 64: Photo by Justine Ungaro.



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Editorial

Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671
Assistant Managing Editor Shane Lueck 612-436-4692
Editorial Assistant Linda Raines 612-436-4694
Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner
Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer
Arts Editor-At-Large John Mark
Contributors Kathleen Bradbury, Thomas Ehnert, Nell Gelhaus, Ellen Krug, Steve Lenius, Shane Lueck, John Mark, Jennifer Parello, Randy Stern, Joy Summers, John Townsend, Bradley Traynor, Carla Waldemar

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690
Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
Account Executives Robert Felton 612-436-4697, Richard Kranz 612-436-4675, Matthew Leavis 612-436-4696, Anton Reichl 612-436-4695
Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer
Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator Linda Raines 612-436-4694
Sales Lead Specialist Michelle Ulmer 612-436-4693
Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
National Sales Representative Rivendell Media 212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678
Graphic Designer Mike Hnida 612-436-4679
Photographer Sophia Hantzes
Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.
President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665
Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666
Chief Financial Officer Mary Lauer 612-436-4664
Distribution Manager/Administrative Assistant Molly Gosh 612-436-4660
Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford
Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013), Tim Campbell (1939-2015)

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Lavender Media, Inc.
7701 York Ave S, Suite 225, Edina, MN 55435
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612-436-4685 **Fax**
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MODERN LOVE

BY ANDY LIEN

Looking at this 2016 Spring Wedding Issue, what came to mind right away is the theme "Modern Love." That we lost the singer of the song, dear David Bowie, recently only makes it more apropos. His song could be considered to be more of a negative take on weddings and getting to the church on time, or it could be just leaving everything up to interpretation, which is how weddings are usually best executed. How do I interpret the concept of modern love for the purpose of this wedding issue? Modern love includes people, fashion, florals, food, drink, photographers, and events that are now. And now is all about letting us define ourselves and where we fit into the world. It's a post-marriage equality world, by definition, and we're still striving to make it fit for each of us, regardless of relationship status, on our terms...for ourselves and for each other.

Spring is always the big time of year for wedding issues. I like to be sure we do a special feature that showcases some of our important new and emerging wedding vendors and venues in this issue, this time in a brand new space called Paikka in St. Paul. Nestled into a space that is adjacent to Lake Monster Brewing, this space is modern in its rustic repurposing. Taking what's old to be new again is very now. Very appreciated. Very open to interpretation, which is the venue owners' goal for this space: to leave you to decide how you want to use it for what you envision as your special day.

Given the parameters of spring and summer as the time period within the year of 2016, important and modern concepts must include where the food might be sourced and how the waste is handled. Not sexy concepts, but extremely relevant ones. Common Roots not only comes to mind as a caterer with tasty and attractive food, but also as one that is environmentally conscientious. Then, as the perfect follow-up to a delicious summer meal, I wanted desserts that will cool us down while also being natural and health-conscious. On one of the hottest nights last summer, I found salvation in a Strawberry Balsamic Basil ice lolly by Frio Frio at the Little Mekong Night Market in St. Paul. Around the same time, I had my first ice cream mini by Sweet Science at the Brave New Workshop, which was most definitely a gateway mini and I'm never going back to the way it was before that salted caramel cup of goodness. Both were shoo-ins for what to suggest to this audience as clever alternatives to wedding cake (though I would never kick cake out of my bed for leaving crumbs).

Fashion and florals are the steady components of wedding issues, but how they're done is always evolving. Luna Vinca is a long-standing florist that gave us a modern take on natural elements, incorporating lichen and geometric shapes into bouquet inspirations. Flutter Boutique is giving us what is now, not what was then. When I asked what the trends are as we were pulling gowns, we passed on some gorgeous dresses that aren't in the now for ones that showcase beading, lace, and even some higher necklines. Then, for the suits, though Milbern has been around for a very long time, they're current on what works — and works in a budget — for 2016, which is trending away from suit rentals and toward ownership for both men and women. I trust what they say and want to pass that trust and transparency to the readership as something we value now. Today. And always.

To fill in the cast of characters for the fashion element in the feature, I was drawn to people who define themselves on their own terms in our community every day, night, and weekend. In the past, I've used models for these fashion features, who've been lovely and wonderful. But, last year, I started incorporating real couples from our community that have real relationships and history with each other, something that I made into my primary goal for this issue. You can see the connections between them, caught in the photography. With that in mind, I immediately thought of Zsuzsi Bork and her fiancée, Cheena Gorzalski, as well as Oliver Sharp and his boyfriend, Bryce Laine. These are beloved people in the community, something that was abundantly clear as I posted snapshots of the photo shoot in my Facebook feed and the likes and loves for the photos kept my phone notifications active for days. Zsuzsi and Cheena are also known as Xavier, drag performer as well as producer of Dragged Out at the Town House, and Nadi A'marena, burlesque performer and member of The Vigilantease Collective. Oliver and Bryce can be found at two of our favorite bars, The Saloon and Tattersall Distilling, respectively, and Oliver also is well-known as Harrie Bradshaw, a bearded drag queen with legs for days and sass to boot. These couples and who they are to us round out what modern love is and can be, progressive and self-defined.

Not as obvious in front of the camera as behind the scenes are Brett Dorrian and Heidi Garrido. Brett of Brett Dorrian Artistry Studios is my go-to when I think of styling as well as someone who knows the community and the aesthetics and issues that affect the ease and comfort of same-sex weddings. She walks into any situation and infuses it with a level of comfort and expertise that is required for modern weddings in this day and age. And then there's Heidi of HM Photography who photographed this extensive feature in this issue, who's been here for the community for years and years, fighting for marriage equality, photographing parades, and being the photographer for the wedding tent at Twin Cities Pride. She's down to earth and here to make your vision appear in her photography.

As for the rest of the issue, there's more modern to go around. A new book covers *What To Do When Your Gay or Lesbian Child Marries.* No, it's not a new trend, marriages and partnerships have been happening throughout all time. But the difference is that this book actually uses data that's been gathered since marriage equality has been enacted. The results are in. The conclusions are current. The advice is applicable now. And is open to our interpretation.

As for our engagement and wedding stories, the lovers are walking this world with us, going where we go, liking what we like, incorporating our pop culture that is now. Their thoughts and experiences resonate with us. And, the accompanying imagery fits. These are the photographers you want now. Eliesa Johnson of Photogen Inc is hotter than ever in both regional and national magazines and I still show off the 2013 Spring Wedding Issue that she shot for us as a showpiece of what Lavender has done. Melissa Hesse of Rivets & Roses gave us great insight into how to hire a photographer for this community's somewhat-new and sometimes-sensitive weddings in the 2015 Fall Wedding Issue and not only can she shoot some gorgeous events, she knows what she's talking about.

Most of all, we want you to know what you're talking about. We want this to be your resource for ideas and inspiration. Now and in the future.

My heartfelt thanks goes to each person who made this wedding issue what it is and what it stands for as a snapshot of what Modern Love looks like in 2016. We're still writing history. And I'm proud that you're a part of it, whether you're in the pages or reading them.

With you and with thanks,

Andy ■





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LOVE IS IN THE AIR

BY E.B. BOATNER

When I was in grade school, I loved to take long drives with my dad. We'd just enjoy one another's company and look at the scenery, listening to music on the car radio. Out of the blue one day, I had an epiphany when my dad asked, "Have you ever noticed that all the songs are about love?"

Well, no, I hadn't. I must have been about eight or nine, and more into more rough-and-tumble fare like Stan Jones' "[Ghost] Riders in the Sky," or Tennessee Ernie Ford's "Sixteen Tons."

We never discussed the phenomenon again, but I began to listen and take note. Indeed, in 1948–49 there was a veritable tsunami of tunes like "I Don't See Me in Your Eyes Anymore," "The Tennessee Waltz," "You Can't Be True, Dear," "Jealous Heart," and master tear-wringer Johnny Ray's "Broken Hearted" and "The Little White Cloud that Cried."

Love was in the air, and on the air, but it didn't seem to be making the singers or their subjects very happy. I didn't dwell on this phenomenon often, however, I was busy growing up, going to junior and then high school, where everyone was broken-hearted over something and wrestling with the eternal teenaged angst. And so it goes on today, for it seems the course of true love still seldom does run smooth. But what has this to do with our current celebration of weddings?

Well, everything, in a way. Like millions of others worldwide, I recently viewed the last episode of *Downton Abbey*, watching the finale of its six stellar seasons twice. As I read *The Guardian*'s review that gave a raised eyebrow to Julian Fellowes' pairings off and "American happy endings" to his sprawling cast of characters, my dad's comment came back to me; something clicked, and I offer, gratis, this advice to couples planning their nuptials.

Fellowes used a simple device to mend years of familial and below-stairs bickering, venom, and division: he had his characters communicate. Warring siblings, estranged lovers, haughty butlers, they one and all opened up, embracing "with malice towards none" as their standard.

You do the same. Listen. Talk. Listen. You might not be as word perfect as Lord Fellowes, but you'll be way ahead of the game. ■

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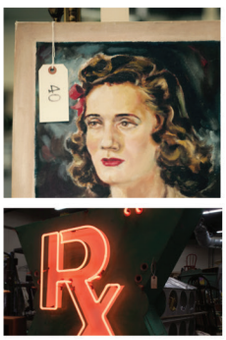
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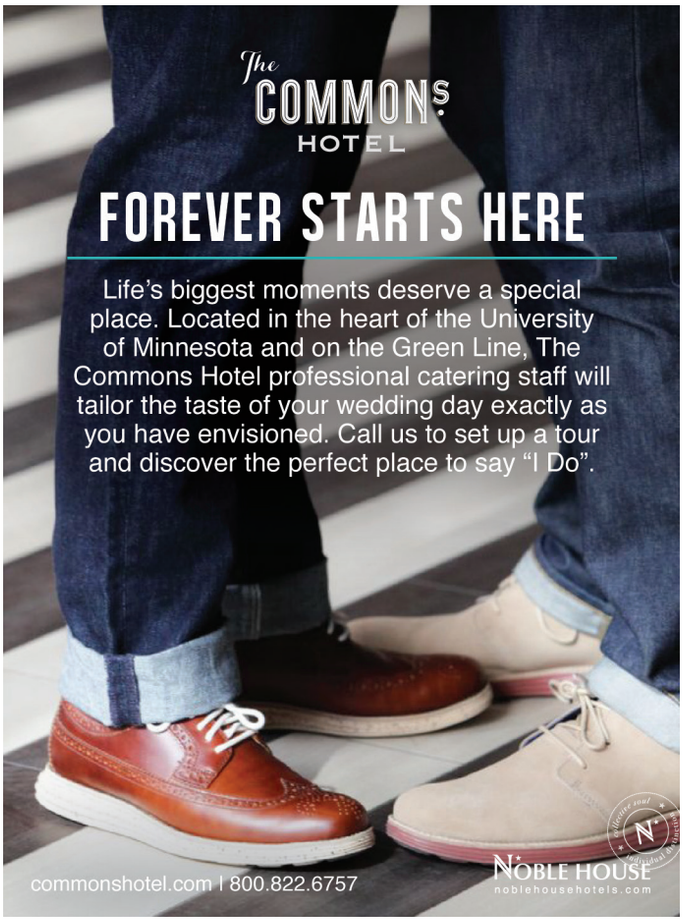
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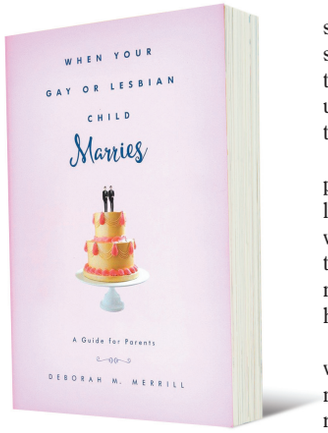


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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR GAY OR LESBIAN CHILD MARRIES

BY SHANE LUECK

Marriage is a beautiful time: two families coming together under a new union, celebrating the love of two individuals. But the marriage also has broader effects, namely on the relationship between the children getting married and their parents.



Deborah M. Merrill, professor of sociology at Clark University, previously explored the effect an adult child's heterosexual marriage had on their relationship with their parents in her book, *When Your Children Marry: How Marriage Changes Relationships with Adult Children*. Merrill followed that research with the effects of the same phenomena for same-sex marriage once it became more common in Massachusetts. More than 70,000 same-sex couples have married in the United States since Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage in 2004.

"I thought the fact that there are no pre-conceived expectations for a relationship with a gay son-in-law or lesbian daughter-in-law might allow for alternative in-law dynamics rather than the traditional tensions," she says. "In addition, I questioned how the different gender combinations between in-laws would impact those relationships."

This new research is published in Merrill's latest book, *When Your Gay or Lesbian Child Marries: A Guide for Parents*. And what she found is actually quite astounding. In a heterosexual marriage, for example, Merrill discovered that men tend to get pulled into their wife's family and this creates tension with the husband's family and the couple.

"I wanted to see if marriage would have the same effect on the relationships between gay men and their mothers-in-law, in particular," Merrill shares. "The study found that gay men, however, do not experience tension with their parents following marriage. Instead, they continue to visit their parents as often as they had before marriage, sometimes without their spouse. In addition, marriage is a time when relationships with parents are changing because the couple is creating their own families and I wanted to see how they balance obligations to both families."

When Your Gay or Lesbian Child Marries is heralded as the first book to look at the effects of same-sex marriage on the relationship between parents and their adult gay or lesbian children. It is also described as the first book to look at the effects of same-sex marriage on other family relationships, including the effects on the couple, extended family, and raising children.

The book is a guide for parents to help them understand the ways in which relationships with their gay/lesbian children might change — from a child's "coming out of the closet" to a gay son or lesbian daughter raising his/her own children. It aims to help parents better comprehend the nuances of same-sex marriage and the struggles their children face as they navigate their sexual orientation over time.

In fact, Merrill describes a parent dealing with a child getting married as significantly different than "coming out of the closet," due in large part to the public nature of a wedding. "The choice to marry typically involves a public ceremony in the presence of relatives, co-workers, and friends," Merrill says. "When your child 'comes out of the closet,' you can still maintain some level of privacy with this news. When a homosexual son or daughter first announces his or her sexual orientation, some parents might believe that their child's homosexuality is just a 'phase.' Once a gay son or daughter decides to marry, it signals a public, long-term commitment."

As such, Merrill describes the book as being written for parents who wish to know more about what their child's life will be like as a married gay man or lesbian woman as well as being for those who are not yet comfortable with their child's homosexuality. As these children advance to marriageable age, it's crucial for parents to be prepared for how to address their relationships with their future in-laws.

The most common mistake Merrill sees parents make when a gay or lesbian child announces his or her engagement is not to be enthusiastic about the wedding or marriage. Adult children can usually sense when their parent is less than pleased about something they intend to do. Merrill's advice is to make sure you are providing a similar wedding experience for your gay or lesbian child as you do for your other children. She says, "Adult children often said that their parents did not treat their wedding as a celebratory occasion like they did for their heterosexual siblings."

A second common mistake Merrill found was not welcoming the new in-law into the family. In fact, Merrill says the most helpful thing a parent can do at this time is to welcome your new son-in-law or daughter-in-law into the family like you would your heterosexual children's partners. "Remember that your child is still your child no matter who he or she marries, and they need your support," she says. "The adult children in this study who had poor relationships with their parents consistently pointed to their parents' lack of acceptance of their spouse, in particular, as a member of the family."

With these two common mistakes in mind, Merrill offered four pieces of advice for parents of gay or lesbian children:

1. Dissociate any negative feelings you might have about homosexuality from your feelings about your child.
2. Provide a similar wedding experience for your gay or lesbian child as you might do (or did) for a heterosexual child. Also, treat him or her similarly to the other heterosexual children-in-law in the family.
3. Be very careful of what you say. Years later, adult children will remember hurtful things that were said.
4. Be open to the positive impacts that may come with having a homosexual child. My study found that relationships between a son and his parents were less likely to be impacted negatively when he married another man than when he married a woman. In addition, parents were more likely to feel as though they gained a second daughter when their daughter was a lesbian. Gender has a profound impact on how relationships get played out in a family.

Most importantly, Merrill says there is no such thing as being too supportive. "Your child will encounter discrimination and homophobia," she says. "Your support is necessary to lessen the impact of that. Your children need you to be there for them now more than ever; be happy for them that they have someone who loves them." ■

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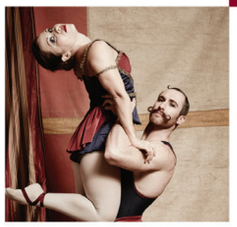


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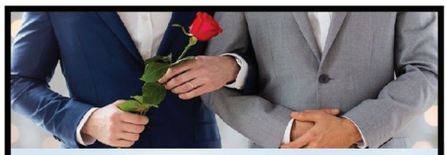
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On Oliver (left): S. Cohen suit ($495), Damon shirt ($45), True Forum pocket square ($30) and tie ($20) from Milbern Clothing; Boutonniere ($12.50) with leucadendron, agapanthus,and eriostemon from Luna Vinca.
On Bryce: S. Cohen suit ($495), Ike Behar shirt ($75), Bruno Piatelli pocket square ($30) and tie ($20) from Milbern Clothing; Boutonniere ($12.50) with slivered wood, agonis, and eriostemon from Luna Vinca.

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On Oliver: Daniel Hechter linen sport coat ($175), Austin Reed trouser ($99.50), Modena shirt ($25), True Forum pocket square ($30) and tie ($20) from Milbern Clothing.
On Bryce: Afaazy sport coat, vest, and trouser ($175), Damon shirt ($49.50), Bruno Piatelli pocket square ($30) and tie ($20) from Milbern Clothing.



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Founded in 1946, Milbern is a family-owned, third-generation business that has been providing its clients with "Quality at a Discount" in the Twin Cities area for 60 years. Originally established as Milton Clothing, a wholesale jobber, in the warehouse district of downtown St. Paul, the name changed to Milbern as they began selling direct to the public at discounted prices.

In today's parlance, "discount clothier" would mean "fair price," and that description aptly suits Milbern's suit offerings, starting at $125 and going up to $695. Milbern even offers custom clothing for those who just aren't able to find what they're looking for in today's menswear market.

"Our vision and aesthetic is rooted in 'traditional classic' with an eye toward current trends and styles," Jenny says. "If you are looking for navy pinstripe we have it. If you want unique linen, we have that as well."

Now located in the Midway area of St. Paul, equidistant between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul, Milbern has the styles and service to make your wedding day (or everyday) attire exactly what you were hoping for. Milbern stocks over 2000 suits in a wide variety of fabrics and manufacturers in two-, three-, and four-button jackets. Want double breasted? They've got it. And in terms of sizing, customers would be hard-pressed to find a more extensive catalogue; Milbern offers regular, long, short, extra long, extra short, *and* many of those hard to find big and tall sizes.

This variety in sizes and cuts allows the wearer to find the perfect suit to fit like a glove, no matter the size and shape. Whether that be larger or smaller, broad, masculine shoulders or a more curvy, feminine physique. In fact, Jenny has quite an extensive experience working with women to find a suit for their wedding day.

And don't think the suits, though discounted, are anything to scoff at. Milbern's collection offers quality suits by such big names in the fashion world as Austin Reed, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, and Zanetti. They also offer an extensive collection of their own private label suits as well as a full custom made-to-measure department. And don't forget the free hemming of hems and cuffs that comes with your purchase!

As far as trends go, Jenny says everything in suits continues to get shorter and tighter. "That's great for the younger set," he says. "However, after success sets in, a more traditional fit is both more appropriate and, frankly, comfortable."

For the majority of wedding's the suits continue to be in either greys or blues, although you'll be able to find a variety of colors (maybe burgandy is for you?) and patterns (pinstripe, anyone?) to suit your personality. "On the periphery, we are seeing unique suits for destination and summer weddings," Jenny shares. "Think soft cottons in earth tones and linens in shaded pastels. The one statement I make to all wedding couples is this: it is your day, you decide what to wear!"

For spring and summer weddings, Jenny advises to stay away from darker, heavier colors and cloths. "And anticipate a change in weather," he says. "It is Minnesota, after all!"

And at prices comparable to a rental, Jenny noticed that suit rentals are on the way out, with more couples opting to purchase the suit. The truest misconception, Jenny says, is the cost. At Milbern it's possible to get a whole wedding outfit for $165, including a shirt and tie. "If you prefer, we can create a complete custom ensemble for you at a very fair price as well," he adds. "Milbern is here for you! After all it is your day, just let us be there with you!" ■



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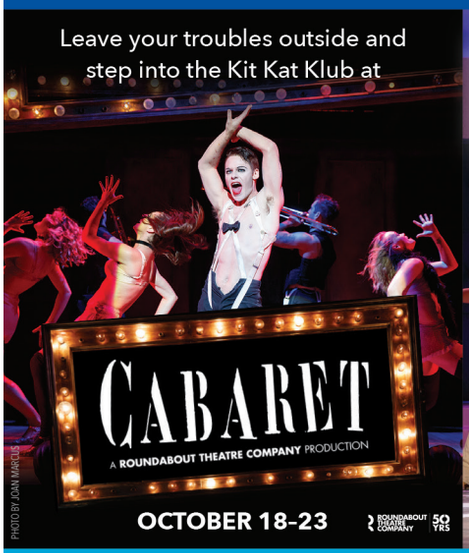
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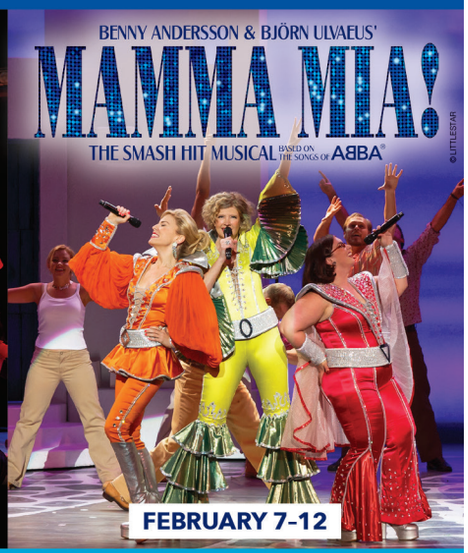
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On Zsuzsi: Daniel Hechter linen coat ($175), Chiari trouser ($145), Modena shirt ($25), Ike Behar pocket square ($30) and tie ($20) from Milbern Clothing.
On Cheena: Heidi Elnora "Ashley Diaz" dress ($3850) and Jaclyn Jordan "Natasha" belt ($480) worn as headpiece from Flutter Boutique; Bouquet ($160–$210) with sliced wood spheres, blushing bracket, vendella roses, hypericum berry, and agonis from Luna Vinca.

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On Zsuzsi: Max Davoli "Blue Windowpane" suit ($395), Enro shirt ($59.50), Calvin Klein tie ($30), and Bruno Piatelli pocket square ($30) from Milbern Clothing; Corsage ($15) with lisianthus and agapanthus from Luna Vinca.
On Cheena: Leanne Marshall "Solaine" dress ($2680) from Flutter Boutique; Bouquet ($160–$210) with white agapanthus, vendela roses, green lisianthus, tropical leaves, and podocarpus from Luna Vinca.



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"Even 10 years ago, there were plenty of brides who were looking for a more modern twist, maybe not wanting the matching dresses that were traditional. Or maybe they wanted matching dresses, but not necessarily the styles that were available," says Laura Bredice, Flutter's manager. "And above all, it was about creating an experience. Flutter has always strived for the best possible customer service for all our clients; brides, bridesmaids and all of their family and friends. The wedding planning process can be stressful, and we hope to not only help our brides find exactly what they are looking for, but to create memories!"

Under Fahlsing's leadership, Flutter has grown immensely. The boutique has moved to its new location in the carriage house of the Semple Mansion, almost tripling the square footage. The bridal collection has also expanded, carrying lines exclusive to Flutter in the midwest.

As Bredice says, Flutter is a female-owned and -operated bridal store in Minneapolis with a focus on creating the best possible experience for brides throughout their entire dress shopping process, from first appointment all the way through dress pick-up. "We cater to brides looking for something special," she says. "Ethereal, whimsical, classic, and timeless; our collection captures the best of it all. We also have a huge variety of bridesmaid dresses, mother of the bride and groom, and flower girl."

According to Bredice, simplicity, color, and comfort are on the rise in the bridal world. "Our brides want a dress that represents them, that they wear; not that wears them," she says. "We like to ask our brides how they want to feel. And usually, they want to feel like the most beautiful version of their everyday selves. Brides are loving delicate styles: open backs, lace, light fabrics and the ability to customize their looks."

That customization can come in countless variations. As Bredice says, in today's bridal world, there aren't any rules. "If a bride wants something unconventional; great! If she wants something very traditional; wonderful!" she says. "Flutter's style is softer, lighter, and more ethereal overall. Embellishments for us are provided in floral appliques, subtle beading, belts, and lace accessories. We hope that our brides will all look back at their photos years down the road and feel like their gown is still beautiful and contemporary."

Even if a gown isn't in the works, Flutter has something for everyone. Jumpsuits, Bredice says, have made a big splash on the bridal scene, and Flutter offers several jumpsuits from a few of their designers. Bredice shares, "It takes a certain bride to want to wear something a bit more daring. We are also seeing a rise in separates! Whether that be crop-top style with a skirt, or a bodice with a skirt, our brides love the option of customizing."

Of course, as with any decision in relation to your wedding day, doing some research ahead of your appointment about which styles catch your eye can be incredibly helpful. And keep an open mind. Bredice notes that until you are actually in the dress, you won't know if the style actually works for you and your body type. But, having a jumping off point is helpful. Additionally, have a good idea of what you are comfortable spending; you never want to try on (and fall in love with!) a gown that is completely out of your price range.

"If you are lucky, you will find several gowns that make you feel bridal and beautiful," she says. "But, at the end of the day, there will be one gown that you compare all others to, and that will be it!"

And on appointment day, Bredice cautions against bringing too many people along, maybe just one or two. "It's hard to please everyone," she warns. "Our goal is to make sure the bride chooses the gown she loves best; not what her entourage of friends and family want her to wear." Whether one bride or both brides will be wearing gowns, be sure to bring along the people whose opinions matter most.

With all of the TV shows about wedding dress shopping, Bredice sees brides come in with plenty of misconceptions about what the process will be like. She shares, "I can't speak for all dress shops, but at Flutter, we want you to have fun! You are welcome to try on as many dresses as you want during your appointment. We are happy to be as involved or uninvolved as you want. And as far as knowing it's 'the one' because you start to cry? That might be the biggest misconception! If you cry, great! If you don't, great! But don't let that be your deciding factor."

From start to finish, Flutter is here to help you create and execute your bridal vision, whatever that may be. "We love working with all types of brides, whether your wedding is big or small, casual or beyond glamorous!" Bredice says. "Our goal has always been and will always be to make you feel absolutely beautiful on your wedding day." ■

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"We do not have formulas or wedding packages, all of our designs are custom order. Whether you prefer tight and compact, or big and wild arrangements, we do it all."

Such words from floral designer Clare Hoogesteger are a welcome relief for couples thinking about their wedding. She continues, "We've always strived to be completely honest and provide excellent customer service. We often receive compliments on our promptness and attention to detail."

She is referring to Luna Vinca, the floral shop that opened in 1998 in Uptown before moving to the North Loop in 2009. Owner Jennifer Guion wanted to blend her interests in both science and art, and branched out into a few professions before settling on floral design. The growing business creates award-winning wedding flowers, event florals, and daily deliveries. During the almost 20-year history as owner of Luna Vinca, Guion has cultivated invaluable relationships and knowledge of the huge

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



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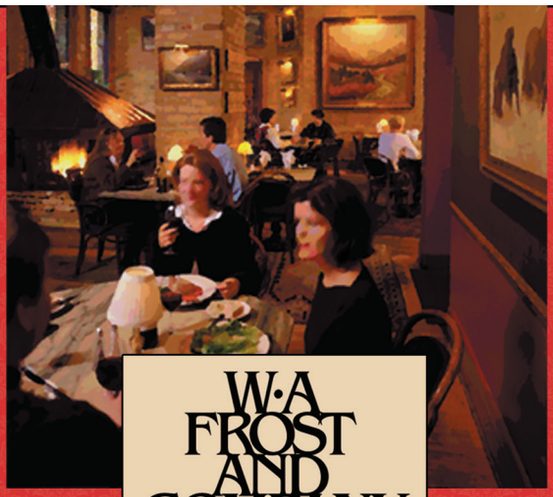
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variety of event venues in the Twin Cities area. She still looks forward to what changes the future will bring to the design industry.

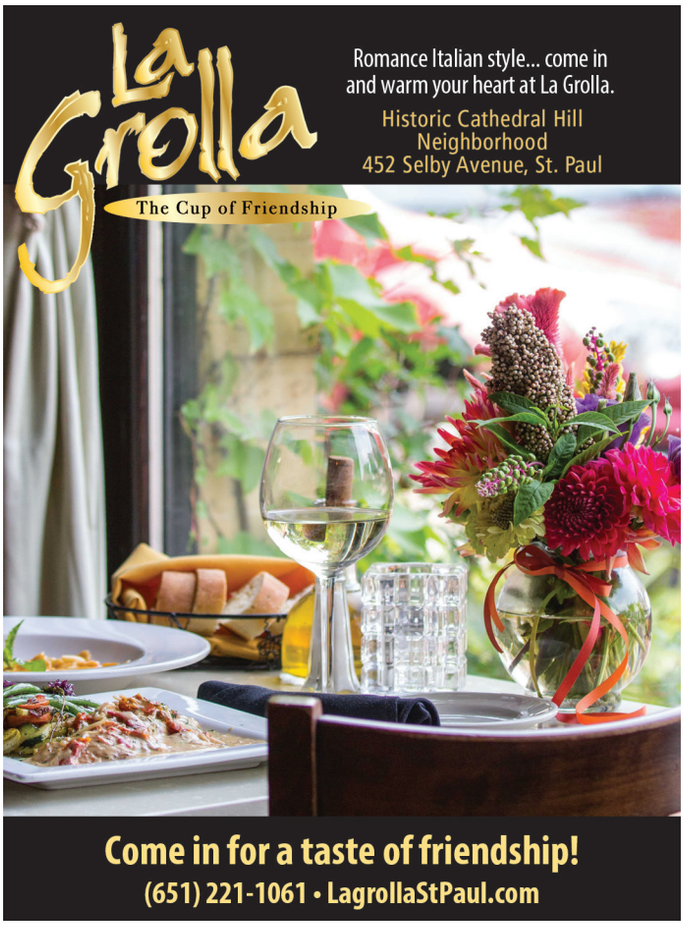
Currently, Hoogesteger is noticing a return to more natural looking designs in the industry. "Lots of greenery and foliage, and loose organic shapes are very popular," she says. "This spring and summer, couples are gravitating toward neutral tones with greenery, and pops of rosy pink and lavender."

The best advice Hoogesteger could give couples is to allow for some flexibility when choosing your flowers. Notably, in terms of availability. "Some things just aren't available, which is frustrating for us and our clients," she says. "Dahlias, for example, are not in great condition in the spring and summer months, and almost everybody loves them."

She also encourages couples to be careful with their color choices, and warns not to choose a wedding color that is really close to a color that you dislike. She says, "Flowers only come in the colors that they come in. For example, if you love Claret red but hate burgundy, it will be hard to find flowers that work for you."

Pinterest inspiration comes with a caution as well. It can be nice to have an idea of what you're looking for, but keep in mind that many of the ideas are taken from expensive celebrity weddings. And with that in mind, Hoogesteger has one final note for couples: "If flowers are important for your wedding, your budget should reflect that." ■

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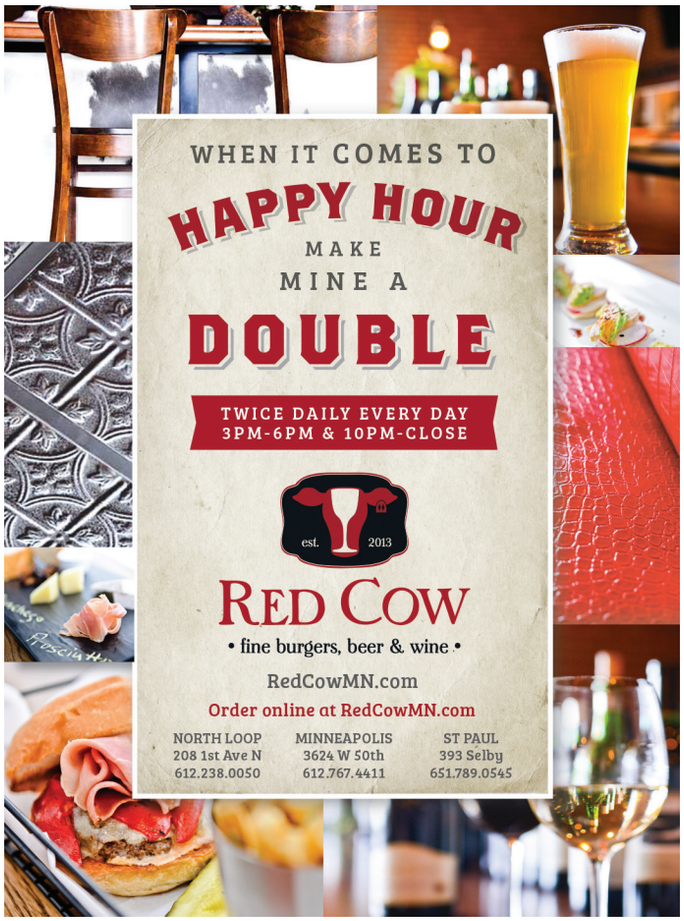
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THE COMMON ROOTS EXPERIENCE

Different people look for different things from a caterer, but Common Roots just might be the solution for everyone.

"Minnesota is our home, and our inspiration," says Morgan Ross, sales manager at Common Roots. "Our goal is to create food with local character that is worthy of any celebration or special event."

As a mid-sized, locally owned company, Common Roots provides delicious food and friendly, professional service, whether catering a simple office breakfast or boxed lunch, or an elegant wedding or grand corporate event. Common Roots is committed to making food and beverage planning simple for clients, and working closely with them to meet all of their event needs, including full bar service, rental coordination, and design assistance.

At Common Roots, the staff provides clients with truly from-scratch catering, representing a modern take on classic American cuisine using as many local and organic ingredients as possible. "We are proud to support local and sustainable farmers," Ross says. "Our short growing season means that every sprig of dill, every pea shoot and pepper and tomato, every cherry and apple is a cause for celebration. All year long, we work with local farmers raising animals for meat and dairy in a sustainable way, and growing grain organically. We believe in letting the ingredients speak for themselves."

Because Common Roots makes everything from scratch, Ross says they can easily control which ingredients go into each menu item, allowing for dietary restrictions. "Our menu was created with this in mind and we are able to offer a number of vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options," Ross says. "Additionally, we are more than happy to provide alternative custom menu options for anyone with food allergies or intolerances."

That same commitment extends to operating in an environmentally responsible way. All of Common Roots' food waste is composted by Eureka Recycling. According to Ross, since opening, the company has diverted

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Clockwise from left: Sweet Potato Canapé with roasted sweet potato, blue cheese, and crispy shallots; Sweet Pea Crostini with shaved local parmesan, lemon zest, and cracked pepper; Prosciutto Melon Bite with cantaloupe, mint, and balsamic; Beef & Asparagus Roulade with grass-fed beef, fresh asparagus, scallion, and sweet mustard glaze.

hundreds of thousands of pounds of waste from landfills, and they provide compostable or reusable service ware for all events.

That attention to detail and care also translates to the customer experience. When choosing a catering company, it's best to make sure that all costs associated with service are included in the original proposal. At Common Roots, they are very transparent in the way they operate and have a separate charge for food, beverage, staffing, equipment, and service charge. And when vetting a caterer, be sure to ask about the company's tipping policy.

"We include a percentage service charge that covers event coordination, setup and teardown, and composting services," Ross says. "We believe it is important to pay all our staff a fair, competitive, and reliable wage, and therefore, we do not charge for or accept gratuity, and make sure the client understands this policy."

Catering coordinators assist with event coordination from beginning to end and can include venue selection, food and beverage planning, and timeline coordination. And the team of highly trained service staff are dedicated to flawless event execution for every event.

Want a traditional sit-down dinner? Common Roots can make that happen. Want to follow the trend of opting for hors d'oeuvre or cocktail receptions? They are happy to make that vision a reality as well. Ross has also seen a rise in Friday evening weddings, a mixture of casual and formal events, as well as local craft beer becoming a larger focus for Minnesota couples.

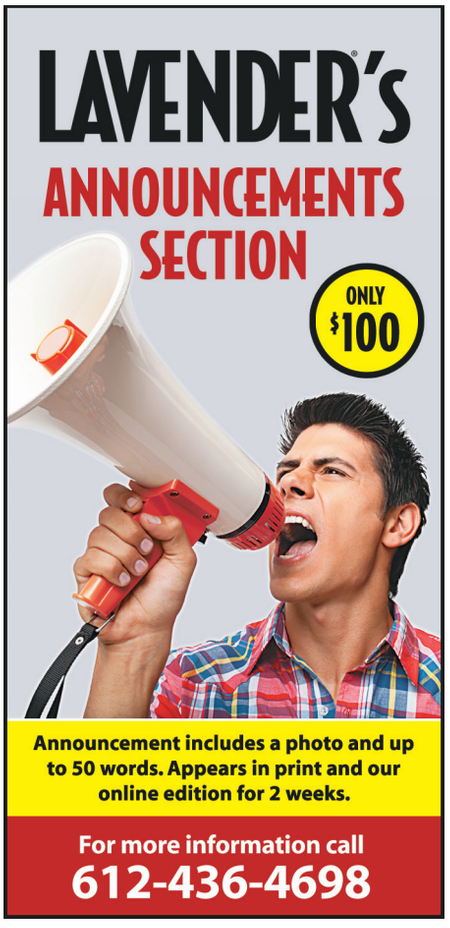
Whatever your vision, Common Roots is happy to work with other vendors to make your day special. For example, if you need linens and serviceware, they have that in house, but are also happy to make referrals if you prefer to work with a rental company. The focus is always on the client and their vision.

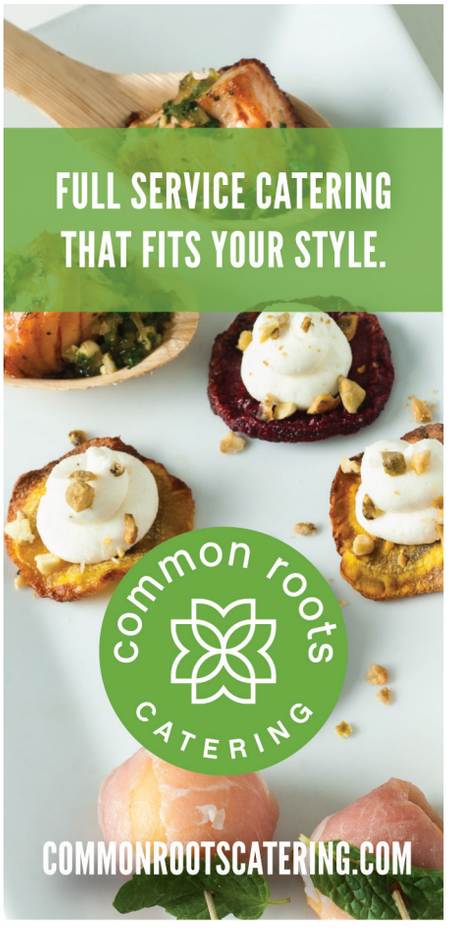
"Customer service and client satisfaction are our top priorities," Ross says. "We respond to any new inquiry the same day it is received and pay specific attention to each client's vision and budget." ■











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MAKING MOUTHS HAPPY

Frio Frio makes mouths happy. It's as simple as that.

Say hello to some of the best new frozen treats in the Twin Cities mobile scene. From one of the creative minds behind Angel Food Bakery in downtown Minneapolis, Katy Gerdes takes her love of all things sweet, delish, colorful, and twisted and applies it to one of the best things she knows to "spread the happy": popsicles — or as she and partner Chris Weber like to call them, "ice lollies."

As a baker, Gerdes has noticed more wedding couples going with desserts and treats that have meaning to them. If a couple likes donuts, they are having donuts for dessert. If the couple likes ice cream, they are rolling out the ice cream. The trend is to go with what you want, whatever that might be.

And if what you love are perfectly frozen goodies from fresh, pure fruit, Frio Frio is what you want at your wedding. Taking inspiration from classic Mexican *paletas*, Frio Frio twists in many delightful additions, creating combinations like Grapefruit-Carrot-Ginger, Strawberry-Balsamic-Basil, and Kiwi-Apple-Kale.

Frio Frio was conceived during a night when Gerdes and Weber were researching gummy bear recipes online (like everyone does), and an image of gummy bears in a popsicle showed up. Gerdes shared her idea to start a popsicle cart in Minneapolis, in which Weber enthusiastically begged to be included. That night they worked out the details and Frio Frio was born.

"One of the things we love about the Twin Cities area is how people here embrace and support local, new, unique products," Weber says. "This will be Frio Frio's second summer in production and this year we would love the opportunity to work with more couples and special events. We have new flavor ideas and looks for ice lollies but need that special occasion to create them."

As their website states in bold letters, everyone needs more happy, and Frio Frio is making it happen. "It is never fun when you are bummed out, stressed, or worried, but it happens and part of the reason we started Frio Frio is because we want to bring a happy, fun feeling to people," Weber says. "It's hard to frown when licking an ice lolly. Hopefully we can help people enjoy a moment, remember old memories, take their mind away from things for a bit or just give people a smile." ■





A LITTLE TASTE OF SWEET SCIENCE

Everyone can agree on ice cream. From toddlers to grandparents, it's the irresistible treat that brings people together and creates a community. And that's precisely why Ashlee Olds started Sweet Science; because, as she says, "ice cream should be great tasting and complex while uniting fellow ice cream lovers together for a few moments of chilled bliss."

Olds and her team start with locally sourced natural and organic ingredients before meticulously combining them to craft the smoothest, most flavorful ice cream this side of the Milky Way. One taste of Sweet Science and their motto becomes clear: "Making ice cream takes skill. Perfecting it takes science."

"When you start with amazing ingredients you don't really need to do much to them to make them shine," Olds says. "If you keep your suppliers and partners local the money stays in your community and you build a stronger system. We make everything, including the ice cream bases, from scratch, which is unusual in the industry. This allows us to have complete control over the end result."

Although Sweet Science doesn't typically do custom flavors for your big day, they are happy to do custom labels to coordinate with the theme of the wedding. Couples can pick from what's in stock at the time of the wedding, and Sweet Science always has all sorts of interesting seasonal flavors. The most popular? Salted caramel, berry crumble, and dark chocolate sorbet.

With creamy flavors like that, it's no wonder Olds has seen a rise in modern couples starting to serve things that are less traditional, like pies, cupcakes, and other desserts; something unique to really speak to who the couple is as individuals. With her delicious "minis," Olds gets many requests for weddings. She says, "A lot of times they will be served with cake but it's also a fun item to put out with a late night snack when people need to cool down from dancing all night!" ■

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WELCOME TO PAIKKA

Located in a renovated mattress factory in St. Paul, you'll find Paikka, a brand new event venue adjacent to a beautiful train-track-turned-courtyard. The design of the space embraces the raw industrial aesthetic of the building, but is equally warm and imbued with character.

A Finnish word meaning place, owners Marlo Munch and Angie Trygg are eager to share their paikka. As the website says, "Welcome to our place." The name holds even more special meaning than its literal definition, Paikka is a name borrowed from a cabin on an island on Namakan Lake in northern Minnesota. Pikku Paikka, "Little Place," was in Angie's family for decades, but is gone now. It is their hope that "Paikka will capture the same spirit of a lost place that was shared by many and treasured immensely."

The lease was signed in December 2014, just before the new year, but they began improvements in late fall of 2015. A good friend was their broker and new the space was up for lease. "This is the only space we looked at and fell in love immediately!" Munch says. "We sought out a space with character and history in which we could envision all different types of events. The adjacent courtyard, high ceilings, and striking architecture really sold us."

The two women started this venture with a desire to bring a beautiful gathering space into the Twin Cities that isn't like something they've seen here before. "It's important for us to bring people in and let them transform the space and make it feel personal," Munch says, "but also for us to have some creative agency on a large scale."

At this time, they are happy to make vendor recommendations to clients, but don't have a required or preferred list, meaning couples are free to make their big day according to their own specifications. Paikka requires a licensed and insured bar staff to serve alcohol at all events, but clients can, however, purchase their own alcohol from anywhere.

Couples are also encouraged to bring in their own decor, including hanging florals, lights, and installations. Candles are permitted if contained, and Munch and Trygg have a collection of furniture that is available for use as well. Couples should note that, although Munch and Trygg do not install the decor, they are happy to brainstorm with clients. This openness for customization should prove to be a huge draw for couples planning their big day, but clients should note that restrooms are gender-specific, though they offer plenty of stalls.

A collection of floor lamps, ambient lighting, and ceiling pendants illuminate the space when it isn't flooded with natural light during the day. This is in addition to the vast amount of space for couples to bring in a DJ with their own lighting setup.

The onsite parking lot has upward of 200 spaces, but if carpooling is an option, Paikka can house even more guests. Munch and Trygg can accommodate a seated dinner for a reception or rehearsal for up to 220 people, or a cocktail reception for up to 350 people. For events with up to 200 guests, Paikka can also host a ceremony. A rehearsal is included in the rental fee any time during the week leading up to the wedding, pending space availability.

The rental fee for the handicap-accessible space also includes access to the catering kitchen (although there isn't a stove; cooking must be done off-site), private suite for the wedding party, coat racks, furniture and some decor, and a one-hour planning and design meeting.

"Every element of decor and design has been handpicked by the two of us," Trygg says. "We have made a space that we feel is beautiful and modern and still very customizable. We stand apart from other venues because we don't have restrictive policies regarding vendors. We want couples to have freedom and flexibility so every event feels really personal."

Operating an event venue should be a natural step for Munch, who has a professional background in florals, and Trygg, whose background is in installation and fine arts. The two women add, "We feel like the most important role we have as venue owners is to make Paikka a place that feels valuable to our community. We want Paikka to be accessible and beautiful and impactful for everyone." ■

PAIKKA
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www.paikkamn.com



Declaration of Love

JOSÉ & ALEX



BY SHANE LUECK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELIESA JOHNSON















"I had an inkling right away."

"I realized I couldn't see sharing my life without him."

Such comments from José González-Maciel and Alex Mazurek, respectively, are typical of couples as they reflect back on their engagement. But how a couple gets to those statements is unique to the relationship and the individuals.

José and Alex officially met at a downtown bar through a mutual friend, but that was just a quick introduction. "A week or so after that, I ran into Alex in Dinkytown and discovered that he lived across the street from my office," José says. "He accepted a lunch date — Wally's in Dinkytown — a couple days later."

Shortly after the lunch date, José went on a month-long work trip to Copenhagen, during which he and Alex would Skype twice a day, which José describes as "grossly adorable." He came back from Copenhagen during Pride weekend, and they've been together since, nearly five years.

José had an inkling that the relationship might be marriage material right away. "Alex is such a special man. He is extremely intelligent, genuinely one of the nicest people I have ever met, and is extremely motivated," he says. "He is also very level-headed, which is the antidote to my hot-headed nature. Alex is my family, so it was due time that we made it legal."

Alex, as part of his level-headed nature, took things as they came. "José was a little overzealous from the beginning," Alex says. "He wanted me to move in after two months. I take my time with things. I never questioned our relationship, but wanted to enjoy our relationship as it was without getting entangled in what the future held. At about the two-year mark, however, I realized I couldn't see sharing my life without him."

When the time came, José had rings custom made by Filigree Jewelers in the North Loop, knowing that Alex wanted a classic wedding ring with blunt edges: Alex's done in white gold, while José's ring is rose gold. "I wanted

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54





to propose with both rings because having only Alex wear a ring during our engagement felt a little weird," José says. "We are both engaged, so if one of us wears a ring, both of us wear a ring."

He continues, "I skipped asking Alex's parents. There was no need. I knew they'd be thrilled. Instead, they were the first ones we called upon getting engaged."

The proposal took place during midterms of Alex's final semester of law school. Knowing that his studying schedule was going to be pretty intense, José had to have a pretty good reason to get him to Minneapolis Institute of Art, or at least close to it. Also, since a photographer was booked for the proposal, José needed an excuse to make him dress up at least a little. So he made fake plans to meet one of their friends for drinks to celebrate her birthday.

Other than that, the rest of the plans were logistical: Dinner reservations at Spoon and Stable, hotel reservations at the Chambers. "Somehow, going back home after such a high seemed a little lackluster," José says. "I also wanted to include our friends somehow, so I asked some of our closest friends to meet us at Marvel Bar after our dinner plans. It was so nice to be able to close out the night with them."

Alex knew the proposal was coming, he just didn't know when. "He is the worst at keeping secrets. Every time his best friend would call, she'd start the conversation asking, 'Is Alex in the room?'" he says. "A few days before he proposed, he was showing me something on his phone when he received a rogue text from my best friend saying, 'OMG, he's going to love it!' And, one night at two a.m. he hastily sent an email upon realizing my ring size was a 10.5 and not, as he had assumed, a 10."

Since José admits to his lackluster secret-keeping ability and Alex knew it was coming at some point, José wanted the proposal itself to be a surprise. Initially he was planning to propose to Alex during an already planned trip to Big Sur. A good friend of theirs told him that Alex had mentioned that he thought he was going to propose at some point during the trip, so in order to maintain the element of surprise, he decided to propose before Big Sur.

"I vacillated between getting on one knee or not. I opted against it because it just didn't seem like something I would ever do," José says. "Instead, I wrote everything I wanted to say on cards, which I handed to him and asked him to read. We have traditionally written cards to each other for any milestone event in our lives that we keep tucked behind framed artwork on our bedside tables, so this added to the collection."

Alex laughs as he says, "Long story short: I was a stick in the mud. I was in my final semester of law school, and we were leaving for a vacation two days later. I had to finish up some writing I had for both work and school, so I could enjoy our vacation worry-free."

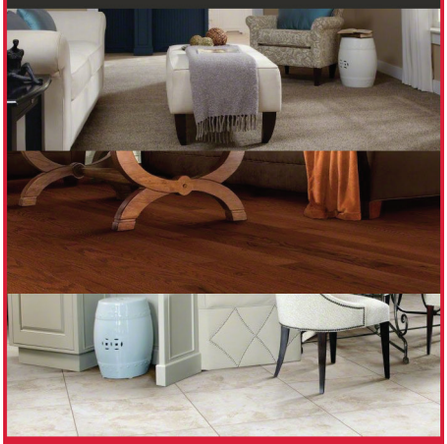
Alex shares he was initially unwilling to shower, change, or leave the apartment. "After José's coercing, I made myself presentable enough to grab a *single* drink with his friend for her birthday," he says. "As soon as we got in the car, she called to say she was going to be late because she was doing her taxes. I was immediately annoyed because I could still be writing at this point."

José innocently suggested they stop at Mia while we wait for her. Alex agreed on the condition that he was able to sit on the ground floor and continue working on his writing. Jose was insistent on a quick stroll through the contemporary art exhibit on the third floor, to which Alex begrudgingly

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agreed. Ordinarily, the contemporary art section is a favorite; they make frequent trips throughout the year, especially in the dead of winter. They even have a Chuck Close print hanging in their living room, making it an appropriate backdrop for what was to happen next.

"I thought, if he takes any time to actually admire any of the work, I was turning around and heading back down stairs," Alex says. "As the thought of bolting to return to my computer percolated, I realized José was nervous and breathing hard. I turned to him as he pulled something out of his pocket. That's when I knew what was happening. He handed me an envelope with a letter. We sat together as I read it. It ended with, 'Will you marry me?'"

Having not yet realized the birthday drink was a ruse, Alex figured they were still going to meet José's friend. But, they left for the Le Méridien Chambers hotel, where they shared champagne while calling friends and family to let them know, as only their closest friends knew this was going to happen.

"Right before I was nervous that everything I had planned would collapse and I would have to improvise," José adds. "During, I honestly blanked out a little. After the proposal I was just really happy. I immediately wanted to start planning the wedding, but Alex gave me a moratorium on any wedding talk."

Alex confirms, "We weren't even out of Mia yet and José started talking about dollar amounts and people. I shut that down right away. I wanted us to enjoy the moment."

Thankfully, Eliesa Johnson of Photogen Inc. was on-hand to capture the moment so the couple can cherish the memories for years to come. As their photographer, Eliesa made the men feel very comfortable right off the bat. "So much so that Alex initially thought he had met her before, which he had not," José says. "It was great to meet Eliesa before the engagement and go over our relationship; she made us feel that she was personally invested. I cannot say it enough: she is absolutely wonderful. She is doing our wedding photos as well."

José admits that not everyone needs to take engagement photos, as he's all abut doing whatever you want for your engagement. But he says this felt right for them, a sentiment that Alex echoes. "At that time we didn't know what we wanted to do in terms of a wedding," Alex says. "If we were going to completely elope or have a formal celebration. It was smart of José to want to memorialize it somehow."

With a wedding set for April 1 of this year, José and Alex have reached the end of the planning stage, which saw them wax and wane on whether no wedding or a big wedding was right for them. The couple decided on an intimate wedding of about 50 of their closest friends and family in their home, followed by a honeymoon in Oaxaca, Mexico.

"I don't think the engagement changed our relationship," Alex confides. "We knew before that our lives were inextricably intertwined. The engagement was just a perfunctory symbol of something we already knew; it was more of a declaration to everyone else that we were dedicating our lives to one another."

José agrees: the way people perceive them as a couple has changed. "There's something about soon being legally joined that legitimizes our relationship," he says. "For a lot of people in our lives we serve as the only example of what it means to be a gay couple. Through our actions we always try to demonstrate that we have similar values, we work hard, and we try to be good people." ■


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RACHEL & LAURA



BY SHANE LUECK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELISSA HESSE













When George Lucas created the *Star Wars* film franchise, he had no way of knowing that the galaxy far, far away would create fans that would eventually use "the force" as a launching pad for their happily ever after.

Laura and Rachel Rice have now been married five months, but three years before they said their vows, Laura was dating a friend of Rachel's when they met. That same friend would later set them up.

"We instantly knew it was a good sign when we realized we both had *Star Wars* tattoos!" Laura says.

The two bonded over the sci-fi saga and their mutual love of cats, in "typical lesbian fashion," as Rachel describes it. "We both were at a place where we were ready and looking for something long-term," Laura says, describing their first date as being like magic.

Although the two seriously began talking about marriage six months into the relationship, after meeting each other's families, Rachel admits the topic initially came up much sooner. "Three months into our relationship, Laura looked at me one day and said, 'I'm gonna marry you someday.' Part of me was like, uh….RUN." Laura interrupts, defending herself by saying she was quoting Johnny Cash before Rachel continues, "But a bigger part of me got so giddy I couldn't ever remember being so happy and satisfied in a relationship. I knew it was the real deal."

At first, Rachel wanted to be the one to propose. Laura told her that she needed to go big or go home — she wanted an audience! "She got so nervous about it that I told her I would take the reigns," Laura says.

Laura ended up having a play written that was based on their first date, with a couple based on them, and entered it into the MN Fringe Festival. Rachel was cast in one of the roles, and her family flew in from North Carolina to see the performance. Still, Rachel had no idea what was coming ("I just thought they wanted to see the show!"). Laura had been nervous all day, which Rachel attributed to anxiety

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60













over their parents finally meeting.

"Laura had this speech that she gave after every show about how thankful she was that when she wanted to propose, she finally could," Rachel says. "On the last night she followed her speech with 'and if I can take a few more moments of your time I would like to do that now.' I was completely flabbergasted."

To top off Rachel's surprise, Laura had a videographer capture the whole experience following the closing performance, with both of their families and countless friends in the audience there to watch.

Once Rachel regained her composure, the time eventually came to start planning for the big day, which came with some extensive research on the part of the couple. "We read a lot of reviews, and some idea of what we wanted going into it." Laura says.

Rachel pokes at Laura, chiming in, "By 'we' Laura means 'she.' Laura came up with a list of places and I came up with a list of places. She didn't really like my list," Rachel laughs. "In the end, Laura and I chose a beautiful small park in St. Paul for the ceremony and the hugely popular Science Museum for the reception. It was a blast!"

Thinking of vendors, Rachel knew a DJ while Laura knew a videographer, but photographers were the most important choice for Laura and came with extensive research before the couple decided on Melissa Hesse with Rivets and Roses. But not every vendor was a joy to work with.

In a cautionary tale, Laura reminds why it's important to vet everyone you're working with. She says, "We had a hard time with the flowers when our original vendor dropped off the planet with our deposit and we had to find someone with not even two months notice."

But the flower crisis *was* solved and the women were able to create a meaningful ceremony that reflected their relationship. "We both wanted our wedding to be beautiful, memorable, and magical, while incorporating our nerdiness and sense of humor," Laura says.

References to how the two initially bonded and other interests were

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spread throughout the day. "It was perfect," Rachel says. "R2D2 and C3PO cake toppers, golden dinosaurs in the centerpieces, lightsabers and wand props in the photo booth."

Did this quirkiness work its way into their attire? From the beginning, Laura and Rachel agreed on some basics: ivory or cream dresses, head/hair pieces instead of veils, and rainbow converse shoes.

"Laura had initially wanted us to see each other's dresses so that they wouldn't clash," Rachel says. "I made a big stink about wanting to see her in the dress for the first time on our wedding day. She finally agreed, so we had my sister and a few of her friends coordinate and make sure they complemented each other."

In fact, Rachel chose her dress first; having out-of-state family meant dress-shopping opportunities were limited. She sent a picture of her dress to Laura's bridesfriends (their loving term for a mixed-gender bridal party) to ensure the dresses wouldn't clash (or match) too much.

The brides describe their 150-guest wedding as being a perfect union between the two, without focusing on whether they were both represented and honored in the wedding. "This was a non-issue for us," Rachel says. "The point of getting married is a unification. It wasn't about Laura. It wasn't about me. It was about us."

Though the guest list grew to be much larger than either had anticipated, the venues proved to be exactly what they wanted. Rachel had her heart set on an outdoor ceremony with plants and flowers surrounding the couple, while Laura wanted a reception hall to match their fun personalities. They found the perfect mix of both with the ceremony at Irvine Park and the reception one block away at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

"It increased our budget a bit (a lot) but was a perfect complement to our personalities and our comforts," Rachel says. "Family, friends, outdoor parks, and SCIENCE."

Laura agrees, adding, "We had to go with the Science Museum's specific caterer, which kind of allowed them to rack up the prices on food and booze. But I think it was worth it; we got a ton of compliments on the food and the reception ran like a well-oiled machine."

With a wedding behind them and Rachel about to graduate from veterinary school at the University of Minnesota, the couple is looking toward the future. This summer, they will be moving to Charlotte, North Carolina for new careers.

"We both have lots of family on the East Coast and in the South," Laura says. "We plan on starting a family in the next three to five years. Rachel says three, I say five."

Rachel laughs before adding, "It will probably be more like two." ■

RESOURCES

Venue (Ceremony): Irvine Park
Venue (Reception): Science Museum of Minnesota
Wedding Planner: Laura Rice
Photography: Melissa Hesse, Rivets and Roses
Florist: Fleur De Lis, St. Paul
Rachel's Dress: Classic Bride, Cornelius, NC
Rachel's Jewelry: Chloe and Isabel
Laura's Dress: Maggie Sottero from The Wedding Shoppe, St. Paul
Laura's Jewelry: Etsy
Shoes: Etsy
Invitations/Stationery: Designed by Jeremy McClellen, ordered through Vistaprint
Food, Drink, Linens/Tableware: Lancer Catering

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DAVID MESARCH & DAVID SOMMER

Photography: Justine Ungaro
Wedding Date: August 15, 2015
Dating Since: February 14, 2001
Location of Ceremony & Reception: Couple's Backyard in Eden Prairie
Florist: Floral Logic
Wedding Coordinator: Magical Memories, Marsha Chernoff Golob
Food Trucks: Home Street Home, Little G's Pizzeria, A Cupcake Social, Geno's Gelato
Music: Midwest Sound
Hair: Men: Hair and Shave by Heimie's Haberdashery
Women: Hair and Makeup by Wow Bar
Decor: Event Lab
DJ: Midwest Sound

















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ROYA MOLTAJI AND MARYROSE DOLEZAL

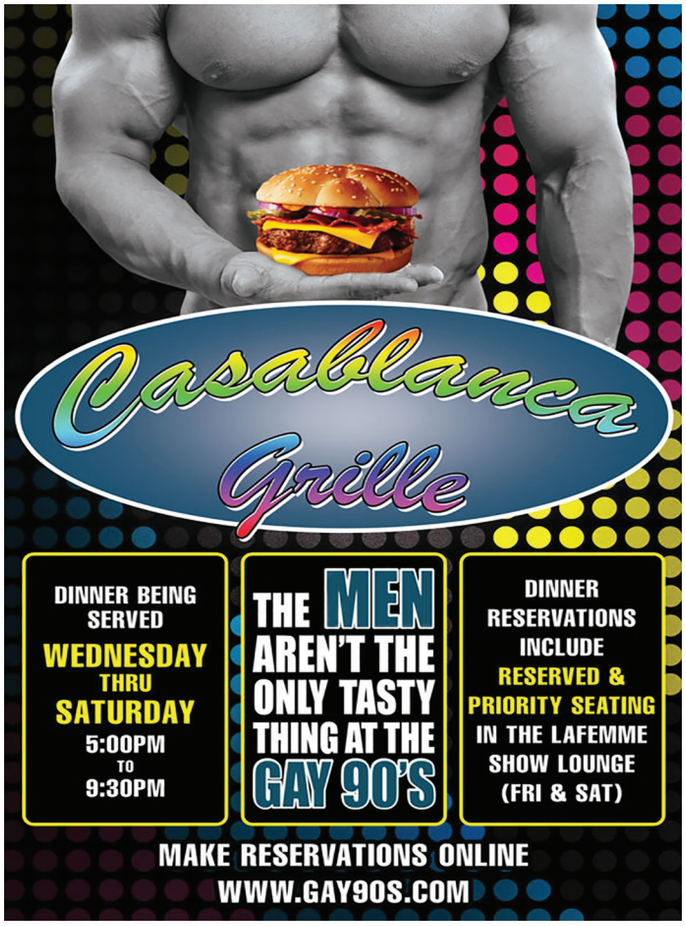
Photography: Noah Wolf of Noah Wolf Photography
Wedding Date: August 29, 2015
Dating Since: June 19, 2013
Location of Ceremony & Reception: Appeldoorn's Sunset Bay Resort on the Shores of Lake Mille Lacs
Florist: Steele's Nursery
Wedding Coordinator: Jodi Crowell
Cake: Taste of Scandinavia
Invitations: Miss Print Graphics










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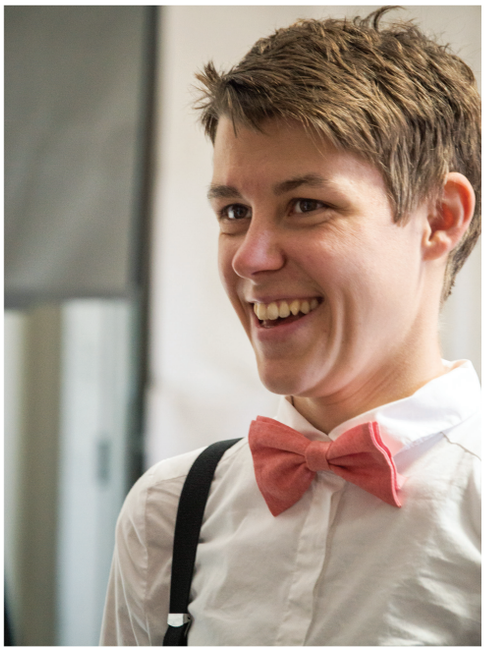






ELIZABETH OSSERS & JENNIFER BERGNER

Photography: Cristina Ossers
Wedding Date: September 26, 2015
Dating Since: January 2011
Location of Ceremony & Reception: The Wedge Table at Wedge Community Co-op
Cake: Dessert Tray from The Wedge Table
Invitations: Jen's hand-drawn design, scanned, printed at FedEx Kinkos

















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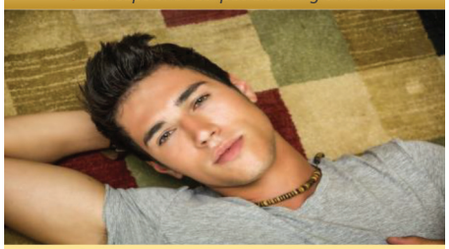
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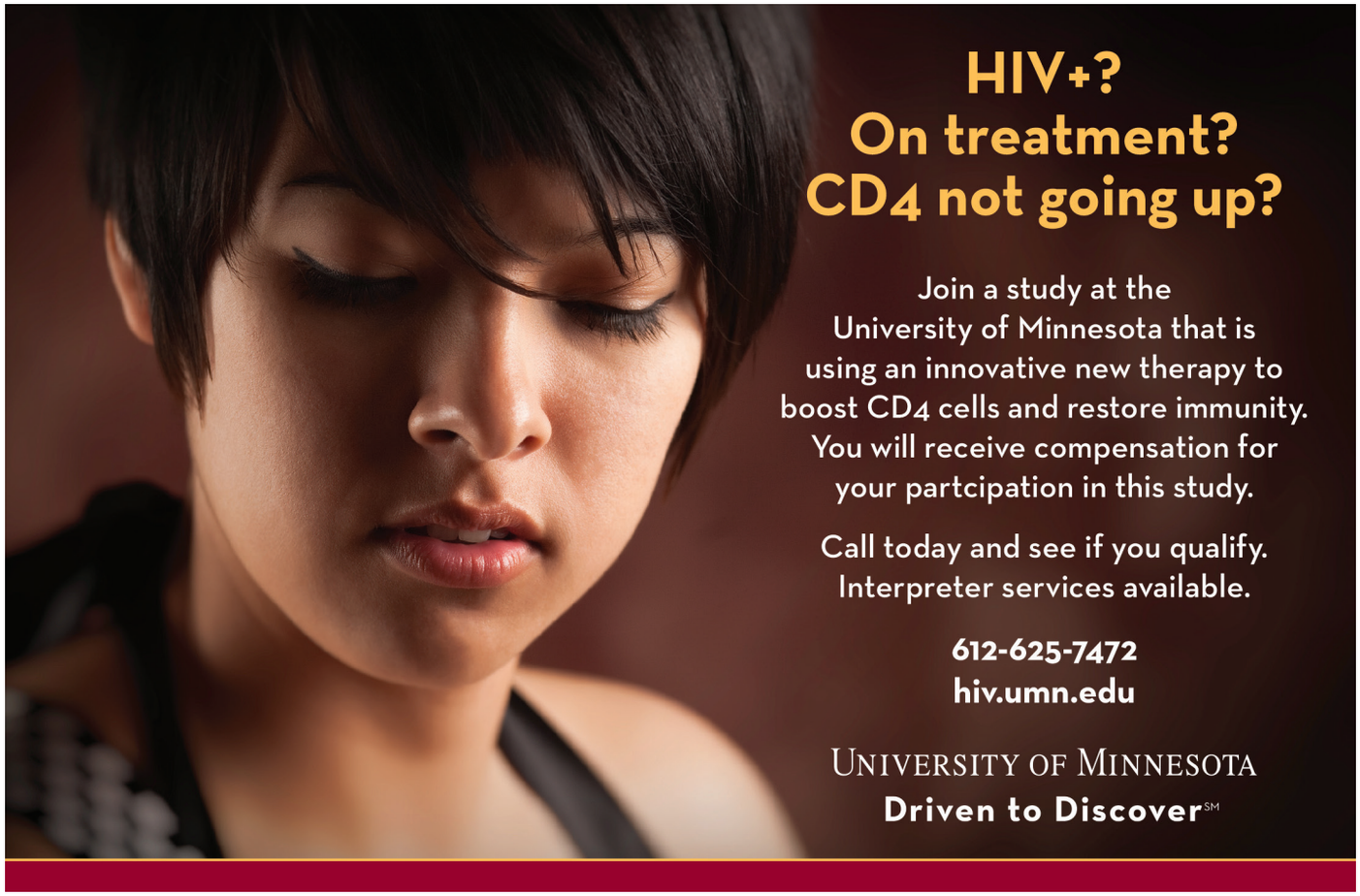
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Wedding Date: September 5, 2015
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